

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**New Year's greetings to
fellow workers behind bars**
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 76/NO. 1 JANUARY 2, 2012

‘Sugar bosses underestimate us,’ Midwest unionists say

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

EAST GRAND FORKS, Minn.—Support for 1,300 workers locked out by American Crystal Sugar for nearly five months continues to be strong in communities across the Red River Valley of the Upper Midwest. Workers remain determined in face of the bosses’ sustained union-busting campaign.

“They thought we would cave in after a few weeks,” said Scott Ripplinger, a locked-out worker from here. “But we have shown that American Crystal underestimated us. We’re still here.”

The workers, members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union, were locked out after rejecting American Crystal’s concession contract proposal Aug. 1 by 96 percent. Three months later, the union rejected a similar contract by 90 percent.

After the lockout, American Crystal brought in more than 1,000 replacement workers from Strom Engineering, a scab-herding outfit in Minnetonka to run its five sugar factories—Hillsboro and Drayton in North Dakota and Crookston, Moor-

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Bourgeois ‘diversity,’ imprisonment: 2 sides of coin

BY JOHN STUDER

In recent decades a new layer of middle-class African-Americans has integrated into a broader meritocracy of professionals of all nationalities, dedicated to defense of their precari-

COMMENTARY

ous status and beholden to capitalist rule. At the same time, there has been a massive expansion in the targeting of working class Blacks by the rulers’ cops, courts and prisons.

The two seemingly contradictory developments are, in fact, two sides of the same coin.

During the 1950s and ’60s, the massive proletarian movement for Black rights smashed Jim Crow segregation.

In the 1960s and ’70s, urban rebellions shook the cities of the North, big and small, and Black nationalist consciousness spread widely. The rulers were forced to concede not just formal equality, but also what became known as affirmative action—enforced by quotas—to break down barriers that

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Alabama action stands up to attack on immigrants, workers

BY JANICE LYNN

MONTGOMERY, Ala.—Some 2,500 opponents of HB 56, the state’s new anti-immigrant law, rallied at the state capitol here Dec. 17 and marched to the governor’s mansion calling for the law’s repeal. More than 20 buses came from cities throughout Alabama.

“I’ve been here 15 years,” said Hilda Arévalo, 42, who came to the rally with her three children and her husband, a construction worker. “I don’t want to have to go back to Mexico. The whole family is here.”

Kiara Lawson, 22, a psychology ma-

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Militant/Jacob Perasso

March and rally in Montgomery, Ala., Dec. 17 against state’s anti-immigrant measures.

Ohio tire workers rally bolsters lockout struggle

Amid piece rate, injuries, bosses press speedup



Militant/Laura Anderson

Steelworkers and supporters rally Dec. 17 in Findlay, Ohio, against Cooper Tire’s lockout.

BY LAURA ANDERSON
AND PAUL MAILHOT

FINDLAY, Ohio, Dec. 17—More than 500 members of United Steelworkers Local 207L, their families and supporters from other unions rallied here today to bolster the fight against Cooper Tire and Rubber Company. Steelworkers from Cleveland, teachers and firefighters from Findlay, and a busload of boilermakers union members turned out for the event.

Some 1,050 members of Local 207L are entering their second month on the picket line. Cooper Tire bosses locked them out Nov. 28 for rejecting the

company’s contract demands to cut wages, speed up work and establish lower pay and benefits for new hires. The workforce is already divided with four different tiers of pay.

Anthony Runion, who has worked for five years at the plant, wore chains with a lock around his chest at the rally. “I wore these when I went to vote down the contract. I’m tired of the threats—their put up or shut up,” he said.

Joe Milek came to the rally with his 10-year-old son. He moved to Findlay from Twin Cities, Minn., after the chemical plant he worked in shut

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Washington peddles lies, demands Cuba release convicted US agent

BY LOUIS MARTIN

A campaign of lies and distortions has accompanied Washington’s arrogant demands that the Cuban government release Alan Gross, a U.S. government agent.

Recent articles and opinions in the U.S. capitalist press have brought more attention to the case and the imperialists’ demands, prompting the Cuban Interests Section in Washington to issue a statement Dec. 2 answering the false propaganda and stating the Cuban government’s position. (See box on page 7.)

A day before the Cuban statement, Sen. Benjamin Cardin and Rep. Christopher Van Hollen sent letters signed by more than 70 members of Congress to the Interests Section demanding Gross’s unconditional release.

Cuban authorities must “immediately release Mr. Gross,” demanded White House spokesman Jay Carney,

the same day. The Barack Obama administration’s position has been that there can be no discussion on improving relations between Washington and Havana until Gross is released.

Gross, a so-called contractor, was

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Art by Antonio Guerrero, 1 of Cuban 5, opens in Seattle 7

US gov't denies illnesses tied to Navy bombing of Vieques

BY SETH GALINSKY

A recently released report by the U.S. Health Department admits that there is an abnormally high rate of cancer and other diseases on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, but denies this has anything to do with toxic substances left behind by the U.S. military's more than six-decade use of it as a bombing range.

"There is nothing positive in this report," Bob Rabin, a spokesperson for the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, told the *Militant* in a phone interview. "The U.S. government and the colonial government of Puerto Rico are not interested in solving this problem."

The U.S. Navy used a one square mile area on the edge of the 20-mile long island as a bombing range, dropping millions of pounds of bombs, rockets, and artillery shells, including some with napalm, depleted uranium, and Agent Orange. Many of the bombs fell into the ocean. Along with the bombing range the Navy set up an ammunition dump and other military facilities on 25,000 acres that had been forcibly confiscated from local farmers and fishermen. The base was also used as a training ground for Washington's 1983 invasion of Grenada, the 1989 invasion of Panama and the wars on Iraq.

The former bombing range is about 10 miles from where most of the island's nearly 10,000 people live. The Navy stopped using it in 2003, after decades of protests by local residents, fishermen and people across Puerto Rico who saw it as an affront to the right of the Puerto Rican people to control their own land

and resources.

Thousands of people poured into the streets of Vieques to celebrate on May 1, 2003, the day after the Navy officially ended its military operations there.

Puerto Rico's colonial status

Highlighting Puerto Rico's colonial status, the Navy turned over most of the land to the U.S. Department of Interior, and only a small amount to the municipality of Vieques.

In February 2005 the Environmental Protection Agency designated portions of the island as a "Superfund" site, due to contamination and hazardous waste from the Navy's operations. Bombs are still being detonated from time to time as part of the cleanup, Rabin said, releasing more contaminants into the air and water.

According to earlier studies by the Puerto Rico Department of Health, cancer rates in Vieques are 30 percent higher than the rest of Puerto Rico. *Viequenses*, as local residents are called, also have a 25 percent higher infant mortality rate, a 41 percent higher rate of diabetes, and a 381 percent higher rate of hypertension than other Puerto Ricans.

A 2003 report by the U.S. Health Department's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, saying contaminants released by the military posed no threat to Viequenses, was widely criticized. The new report notes it was conducted "to be responsive to those concerns."

"We acknowledge that research done by other experts indicate increased morbidity and mortality in the population of



Marc Becker

Celebrating end of decades-long U.S. Navy operations on Puerto Rico's Vieques island, May 1, 2003. Banner says, "We stopped the bombing, Vieques won, the struggle continues."

Vieques," agency officials told the *Militant* by email. "However, after assessing each specific report we have found no connection between bombing associated contaminants and population exposure or public health impacts."

Time magazine wrote in 2009 that the Navy admitted to using Agent Orange as well as depleted uranium in Vieques. In response to a question on the effects of Agent Orange, the agency responded, "None of the data ATSDR reviewed indicated the use of Agent Orange."

"At least they are admitting for the first time that there is a higher rate of cancer and a higher death rate here," Ismael Guadalupe said in a phone interview from Vieques, "even though they refuse to say it's connected to contamination from the bombing range." Guadalupe, now a member of the town council, has been a longtime leader in the fight to get Washington to end its military operations there.

"There's no other logical explanation for the high incidence of disease in Vieques than the contamination from the bombings," John Eaves Jr. told the *Militant*. Eaves represents more than 7,000 Vieques residents who filed a lawsuit against the U.S. government in 2007 charging it had negligently exposed them to toxins.

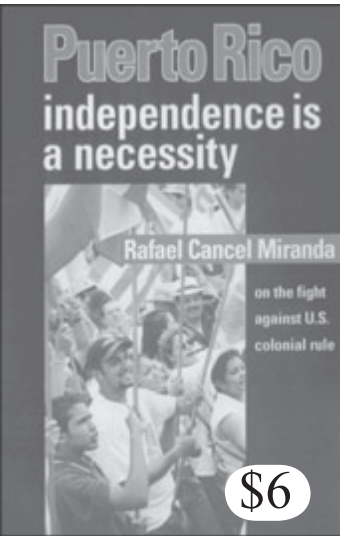
"We're finding concentrations of lead, mercury, cadmium, arsenic, aluminum and uranium in people's hair," Eaves said. "It just so happens those are the main components of these bombs."

In responding to the lawsuit, the U.S. Department of Justice did not answer the charges of health risks. In 2009 the

government argued that the Navy could not be sued because it had "Sovereign Immunity." The judge's 2010 decision on the side of the government is being appealed.

"The Navy spent hundreds of millions of dollars bombing and destroying Vieques," Rabin notes. "We want them to spend whatever is needed to provide a health care facility and medical care with dignity for all those people who are suffering the effects of that destruction. And we want the land returned to the people of Vieques."

**"Our people are becoming aware of their own strength, which is what the colonial powers fear"—
Puerto Rican independence leader Rafael Cancel Miranda**



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THE MILITANT

"Saw the 'Militant' everywhere we went"

"We saw the 'Militant' everywhere we went—from Madison, Wis., to Keokuk, Iowa, to Morristown, N.J."

—Luckie Atkinson
United Steelworkers Local 7-669 member. In 2010-2011, fought lockout by Honeywell, Metropolis, Ill.



Militant/Jacob Perasso

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‘Diversity,’ imprisonment

Continued from front page

had long blocked African-Americans from segregated industries, skilled jobs, promotions, protection from last-hired first-fired and the opportunity to break into higher education.

These victories, led by Black workers, permanently strengthened the entire working class in the United States.

It also opened the door for many Blacks to attend college and for a growing minority to leave the proletariat, transforming their class position and outlook in society.

More than 9 percent of Black families have annual incomes over \$100,000 a year.

A layer of newly well-off Blacks, like Barack Obama, have come to identify not with the vast majority of African-Americans, who represent an oppressed and combative section of the working class, but as part of an emerging privileged social layer that is increasingly diverse in background.

“The Obama administration is a product of the explosive growth in recent decades of a new stratum of bourgeois-minded professionals and middle-class individuals—of all hues of skin—in cities, suburbs, and university towns across the country,” Jack Barnes wrote in *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, published in 2009.

“This is a self-designated ‘enlightened meritocracy,’ determined to con the world into accepting the myth that the economic and social advancement of its members is just reward for their individual intelligence, education and ‘service,’” Barnes wrote.

This meritocracy is convinced they got their special niche on the power of their “brights,” coupled with their desire to help manage society’s lower classes.

They oppose affirmative action quotas, especially where they favor Black workers, instead favoring a focus on “diversity.” This misnomer has more and more come to mean the possibility for the “chosen few” to advance into the meritocracy—to the degree the bourgeoisie deems it necessary to the maintenance and reproduction of stable bourgeois social relations.

For instance, when the Supreme Court took up a challenge to the University of Michigan’s affirmative action program in 2003, 30 U.S. military generals and admirals, including Norman Schwarzkopf, filed a friend-of-the court brief

arguing that such steps were needed to make the rulers’ officer corps more reflective of the ranks of the troops—the better to serve ruling class interests.

These meritocrats are mortified to be identified with working people, fearful that their newfound class status might crumble or be threatened by the toiling and producing majority.

For the working class, the 150-year legacy of resistance to oppression by the Black nationality bodes well for the coming revolutionary struggles. For the propertied rulers and their allies—whether they be Caucasian, Black, Latino or Asian—if you are Black and don’t “make it” out of the working class you are dangerous.

As the capitalist economic crisis deepens, these meritocrats fear you will play a vanguard role in leading the working class as a whole in growing resistance.

For these reasons, the necessary concomitant of bourgeois diversity for a tiny minority is the stepped-up “policing” and incarceration of working people, especially targeting Black workers.

2.5 million imprisoned in U.S.

“By age 23, almost a third of Americans have been arrested for a crime,” the *New York Times* reported Dec. 19.

Just shy of two and a half million people are in federal, state and municipal prisons and jails. Another 93,000 are held in juvenile detention. More than 4 million are on probation, 840,000 on parole. That’s a total of some 7.4 million people.

Over 90 percent of those sent to prison result from plea bargains, rather than go to court. Workers are bullied by prosecution threats of long sentences, regardless of whether they are guilty, and cop lesser terms.

“The spectacular growth in the Amer-

Martina Davis-Correia: fighter against death sentence

BY JACOB PERASSO

SAVANNAH, Ga.—Some 200 people attended a funeral and repast for Martina Davis-Correia Dec. 10 at the Temple of Glory Community Center here. Davis-Correia was a leader in the fight to stop the execution of her brother Troy Davis, framed up more than 20 years ago for the murder of a police officer and executed earlier this year by the state of Georgia

Davis-Correia died Dec. 1 of breast cancer at the age of 44.

“Martina was not only fighting for Troy’s life but for hundreds of inmates,” noted longtime friend Trevor Ferguson

“Martina would be irritated if we just spoke about her,” said Laura Moyo of Amnesty International. Moyo encouraged people to join struggles against the death penalty. Edward DuBose, president of the Georgia State NAACP, said that Martina would say to those at the funeral, “fight on.”

“We pay tribute to Martina, who lived her life to the end dedicated to the fight to free Troy Davis and as a leader in the fight against the death penalty,” said a letter from the Atlanta branch of the Socialist Workers Party to the Davis family.



New York City cops stopped and frisked over 600,000 times in 2010; 84 percent of those stopped are Black or Latino. In half of these stops cops cite “furtive movements” as a pretext.

ican penal system over the last three decades was concentrated in a small segment of the population, among young minority men,” concluded a study published in *Daedalus* in 2010.

Congress, the cops and courts have dramatically expanded the number and use of drug laws, with severe mandatory sentences. Over two-thirds of drug arrests result in criminal convictions.

African-Americans make up 87 percent of youth who are charged under these laws. In 2009, 10 percent of Black males 20-24 years old were in prison.

Nearly one in three Black men aged 20-29 is under “criminal justice supervision”—prison, probation or parole.

Phila. DA drops death penalty against Mumia Abu-Jamal

BY OSBORNE HART

PHILADELPHIA—District Attorney Seth Williams announced Dec. 7 his office will no longer pursue the death penalty for Mumia Abu-Jamal, a political prisoner on death row for 29 years. In October the U.S. Supreme Court refused to consider the DA’s petition to reinstate Abu-Jamal’s death penalty.

Abu-Jamal, an African-American journalist, local political activist and former Black Panther Party member was framed up and convicted in 1982 for fatally shooting city cop Daniel Faulkner in December 1981. The trial was rife with evidence and jury tampering, witness exclusion, police intimidation, racist prejudice and political malice.

Last April the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit unanimously ruled his death sentence unconstitutional. This decision upheld the court’s 2008 ruling that the judge’s penalty instructions “misled” the jury into believing there was no alternative to execution.

Abu-Jamal was moved from solitary confinement in Green County’s state “supermax” prison to medium-security Mahanoy state prison.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People’s Legal Defense and Educational Fund is working on motions for a new trial, seeking to overturn Abu-Jamal’s conviction.

Since his arrest Abu-Jamal has gained support worldwide. His struggle has been a key battle in the fight to end the death penalty.

“Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! and Honor Troy Davis!” was the theme for a Dec. 9 evening program organized by the International Concerned Family and Friends

At the same time, while the cops focus “policing” on young Blacks—using aggressive “stop and frisk” tactics or traffic stops where Blacks are three times more likely to have their car searched—they rarely respond to calls for help inside the Black community.

“Blacks still constitute the core of America’s crime problem,” James Wilson wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* this year.

Today, the U.S. rulers suppress the “dangerous classes” to protect their rule by incorporating more “diverse” and bourgeois-minded Black army officers, judges, prison psychiatrists—and presidents like Obama—to target you.

of Mumia Abu-Jamal at the National Constitution Center here.

Abu-Jamal spoke to the gathering by phone, expressing thanks for all the support.

In a video message from South Africa, Archbishop Desmond Tutu called for “immediate release” of Abu-Jamal.

An engine-roaring motorcycle gang outside associated with the Fraternal Order of Police failed to disrupt the meeting.

“What got this victory was the mobilizations and pressure around the world,” Pam Africa, the sponsoring organization’s chairperson, said on a panel the following day.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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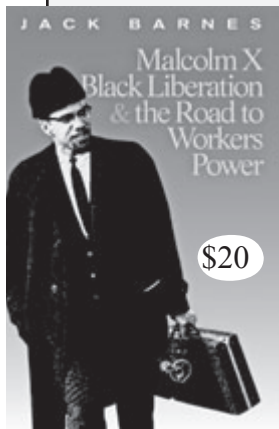
Minneapolis
Building a Workers and Farmers Alliance in Cuba and United States. Speaker: Maggie Trowe, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 30, 8 p.m.
Defend Women’s Right to Abortion! Speaker: Leah Morrison, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 6, 8 p.m. Both events at 1311 1/2 E Lake St., 2nd floor. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.

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Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

by Jack Barnes



“Don’t start with Blacks as an oppressed nationality. Start with the vanguard place and weight of workers who are Black in broad proletarian-led social and political struggles in the United States. From the Civil War to today, the record is mind-boggling. It’s the strength

and resilience, not the oppression, that bowls you over.” —Barnes

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Polar Tank workers in Minnesota end strike, ratify 5-year contract

OPOLE, Minn.—After 19 days on strike, workers at Polar Tank Trailer ratified a five-year contract Dec. 19. “We forced the company to back down on the outsourcing,” said Robin Yorek, a young worker. The concessions on health in the new contract “are the same” as ones the workers had previously rejected, he added.

The workers, members of International Association of Machinists Lodge 623, went on strike Dec. 1 after Polar Tank Trailer bosses demanded major concessions, including a hike in medical costs and the ability to lay off workers 30 days after outsourcing their work. Seventy-five workers here held a mass picket at Polar Tank Trailer Dec. 15, after voting against a previous revised contract offer a few days earlier. The action was accompanied by a hog roast and picnic.

Earlier this year Polar Corp, which had laid off 500 workers nationwide in 2009, hired 620 people to meet growing demand, in large part due to expanded oil production in Texas and North Dakota.

Some 350 workers at the plant here produce trailer tanks that haul oil, dry bulk goods and other products. Polar Tank is the largest manufacturer of these tanks in the U.S. A company spokesperson told the *St. Cloud Times* that the strike had affected production levels.

According to Colleen Murphy-Cooney, a business representative for the local, the contract now reads, “The company agrees not to engage in a concerted expansion of subcontracted work for the sole purpose of eliminating members from the bargaining unit.” The changed wording is a win for the union, Murphy-Cooney told the *Militant*.

The company tried to scare workers saying it was the final offer and “they would permanently replace us if we didn’t vote for it,” said Polar Tank worker Steve Brewer. “They did change the language on the outsourcing.”

—Tom Fiske

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions

by Jack Barnes



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Building workers, fighting for contract, march in NYC

NEW YORK—Thousands of office cleaners and other commercial building workers marched through the streets of midtown Manhattan Dec. 14.

The workers, members of Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ, are fighting concessions demanded by the Realty Advisory Board. Among its demands, the board wants to establish a two-tier wage and benefit structure for new hires. The contract covering more than 22,000 workers at 1,500 buildings expires Jan. 1.

“New employees should have the same benefits,” Wilda Normil, a 32BJ member who has worked in office buildings for 25 years, told the *Militant*.

—Deborah Liatos

NY Transit workers rally against concessions

NEW YORK, Dec. 15—Some 500 members of Transport Workers Union Local 100 and their supporters rallied here today in front of the Metropolitan Transit Authority office against concessions demanded by the MTA.

The TWU contract covers 38,000 bus drivers, train operators, signal maintainers, cleaners, mechanics and other workers. It expires Jan. 15.

“You have to stand up and not back down,” Michael Haye told the *Militant*. “They want us to accept a wage freeze while the cost of living is going up. They want us to pay more for medical.”

Another TWU Local 100 rally is planned for Jan. 15 outside the Sheraton Hotel where negotiations are taking place.

—Dan Fein

Candy workers in Quebec strike over wages, seniority rights

GRANBY, Quebec—Facing a threat of lockout, 240 candy workers here went on strike Dec. 5. They work for the Allan Candy Company and are members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union Local 350T.

On the picket line Dec. 11, workers told the *Militant* they had received a letter from company President Steven Diakowski threatening to lock them out Dec. 14 if they did not accept the bosses’ contract demands. They replied by voting to strike by 100 percent.

Luc Lachapelle, a union shop steward, said the owners want to eliminate seniority considerations for layoffs and job bids. Instead of a wage increase the company is offering a lump sum payment of 2 percent of wages over the four years of the proposed contract. The strike is “about respect for what we have gained over 40 years,” he said.

The company is trying to maintain some production with nonunion employees.

On Dec. 15 workers from Catelli, a pasta factory in Montreal, visited the picket line to show solidarity and serve spaghetti. They are members of the same union.

Messages of support can be sent to union President Sylvain Amiraud at sylvain2505@hotmail.com.

—Joe Young

Quebec Paperworkers protest ‘lockout in disguise’

QUEBEC CITY, Quebec—On Dec. 9 at least 400 workers—members of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union—protested the closing of



Militant/Leah Morrison

Some 75 workers joined mass picket at Polar Tank Trailer in Opoie, Minn., Dec. 15.

White Birch Paper here.

Since the company announced the temporary closing of the plant in mid-November, the union has termed the company’s action a lockout in disguise in order to pressure 600 workers at the plant to accept concessions in ongoing contract negotiations.

The company claims the indeterminate shutdown is because of the newsprint market and production costs. White Birch management did not return a call from the *Militant*.

“We consider this closure a pressure tactic to make us sign a contract with concessions in wages, vacations and other benefits,” Greg Prevost, a quality tester with 27 years in the plant and a member of CEP Local 137 told the *Militant* on the picket line Dec. 10.

—Beverly Bernardo

Striking Limestone workers in Indiana gain support

OOLITIC, Ind., Dec. 17—After a month on the picket line, members of Millworkers Local 8093 on strike at Indiana Limestone here got a boost of solidarity today at a rally in nearby Bedford and a toy drive benefit concert at a pizza restaurant in Bloomington.

“We appreciate all of you coming out to support us,” said striker Ron Watson at the rally of 140. “The union is not just for the union members. It’s for all working people, all across the United States, and around the world.”

Rally participants enjoyed freshly made barbecue sandwiches provided by Rex Smith and Justin Hunter, members of United Steelworkers Local 7-30 who are fighting for their first contract at C&M Conveyor in Mitchell.

“It is an honor to be here,” said Randy Tacket, president of AFSCME Local 3995, which organizes janitors in Bloomington’s public schools.

Wilburn Terrell, president of the Journeyman Stonecutters Association of Indiana, said members of that union who work in the mill and have honored the Millworkers’ picket line are “100 percent” for the strikers. “We’re working together to make it better for everyone,” he said.

—Carl Weinberg

Greece: Solidarity march backs steelworkers

ASPROPYRGOS, Greece—More than 50 striking steelworkers and supporters, including distillery and airline workers, picketed Dec. 13 at the Elliniki Halivourgia plant here.

“Today, a 24-hour strike by other in-

dustrial workers in the area took place,” Nikolaos Harokopos, vice president of the steelworkers union, told the *Militant*. “The shipyards, the other steel mills shut down and hundreds of workers marched in solidarity with our strike.”

The steelworkers at Elliniki Halivourgia have been on strike since late October against the firing of 50 workers and the bosses’ drive to reduce the workday from eight to five hours, a 40 percent pay cut.

Donations of food and money have been key. Strikers’ spouses have established a Wives Committee to help organize solidarity.

Strikers on the picket line saw an article in the *Militant* on the fight by locked-out steelworkers at Armstrong World Industries in Marietta, Pa. A group of them drafted a solidarity message and sent it to the Pennsylvania local the same day to “express solidarity and send militant greetings.”

Although the Greek strikers didn’t know it at the time, the Armstrong workers had returned to work four days earlier. “Keep your heads held high,” it said. “You have a right to be proud of everything you are doing. Your colleagues from Aspropyrgos stand with you.”

—Georges Mehrabian and Natasha Terlexis

Australian port workers fight for contract as bosses end lockout

SYDNEY, Australia—A four-day lockout of port workers at Bunbury and Fremantle in Western Australia by POAGS ended Dec. 15, after intervention by federal Labor Minister for Workplace Relations William Shorten.

Shorten secured the halting of all union action in a national contract dispute at 28 POAGS wharves. In turn, the bosses ended their lockout in Western Australia. More than 1,600 workers at POAGS noncontainer facilities organized by the Maritime Union of Australia have been in a yearlong campaign for a new contract.

During the “indefinite” lockout, POAGS flew strikebreakers over picket lines in helicopters while ferrying others in by boat.

One of the main issues is safety and work hours. Wharfies (stevedores) can work 12-hour shifts for 10 straight days before receiving a day off.

About half the workers are casual and don’t know if they’re working the next day or what shift. Two fatalities occurred at POAGS ports last year.

—Ron Poulsen

Immigrant rights action

Continued from front page

for from the University of Alabama at Huntsville, was one of several members of the Youth and College Division of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People at the rally. “I’m for freedom for everyone,” she told the *Militant*. “Racial profiling not only affects Latinos. It affects African-Americans as well.”

Serilo Méndez, a landscape worker, was one of some 200 people who came from the Albertville area and had participated in the one-day political strike there Oct. 12 against the law.

“We’re here for dignity, more equality, and so that people hear us,” Ana Maria, 40, from Tuscaloosa, who was holding one end of a large hand-painted banner, told the *Militant*. The law’s sponsors in the Alabama legislature say they aim to force undocumented immigrants to leave the state and to discourage them from settling here.

At the rally, conducted in English and Spanish, several speakers made mention of the battles for Black rights that took place in Montgomery—from the refusal of Rosa Parks to give up her seat on a public bus, which sparked the Montgomery bus boycott, to the march from Selma to Montgomery for desegregation and voter registration.

The evening before the march an audience of almost 300 heard from a panel of two freedom riders and two young immigrant rights activists at a meeting at the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church.

Victor Palafox, a 19-year-old undocumented immigrant from Mexico, told the rally at the state capitol that he was inspired by those freedom riders who fought against Alabama’s segregated bus stations in the early 1960s. “Their struggle is my struggle and my struggle is their struggle,” he said.

Joselin de la Cruz, 13, told the rally that her family had gone back to Mexico two months ago because they were scared. “I was left here to follow my dream and I’m not giving up,” she said.

Other speakers included Mary Kay Henry and Eliseo Medina, international president and international secretary-treasurer of the Service Employees International Union; Richard Cohen, executive director of the Southern Poverty Law Center; and Janet Murguía, president of the National Council of La Raza. “This has been the site for the fight against racism and this is another chapter in that

continuum,” said Murguía.

“The power that matters is the power of working men and women,” said José Antonio Castro, program director of the popular Spanish-language radio station *La Jefa*, at the rally in front of the governor’s mansion. “We are never giving up. As long as there are unjust laws, we will be in the streets fighting against them.”

Ben Jealous, president of the NAACP, spoke to the crowd there and took aim at Republican Gov. Robert Bentley. “We don’t have time to wait for you to regret what you did as governor,” he said.

Federal gov’t steps up attacks

While Democratic politicians point blame at the Republican governor and the Republican-controlled legislature that passed the Alabama immigration law, the Democratic administration of President Barack Obama has stepped up attacks on immigrants at the federal level.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement conducted nearly 2,500 immigration audits over the last year, five times more than in 2008. These “silent raids” are used to fire undocumented workers, and, along with increased checking of workers’ documents by employers, are a central weapon in the government’s attempts to intimidate immigrants and make it harder for them to earn a living.

ICE agents deported a record 396,000 immigrants in 2011 through “removals,” which subject workers to felony charges if they attempt to return to the U.S.

The agency has also succeeded in getting local cops to take on greater enforcement of federal immigration laws.

The Southern Poverty Law Center said Dec. 16 that ICE raided mobile homes and apartments in the north Alabama towns of Fort Payne and Collinsville that week.

The courts have put temporary injunctions on provisions of HB 56 that require schools to check on the immigration status of students and their parents and that bans registering mobile homes to people without citizenship or residency documents. Other provisions remain, including one that instructs police to determine the immigration status of anyone they stop.

The Obama administration is challenging the Alabama law on the basis that immigration law is the “exclusive

Los Angeles march demands ‘no deportations’



Militant/Wendy Lyons

LOS ANGELES—Five hundred people marched here Dec. 15 in a “day of action against fear” to protest Immigration and Customs Enforcement attacks on immigrant workers and to demand “an end to the targeted deportation of unionized janitors.” The action was sponsored by SEIU-United Service Workers West. It included home health care workers and janitors, organized by the union, and others. “I support the union’s call for action because many people have fought for rights before us and we have to stand up,” Petra Cabrera, a health care worker, told the *Militant*.

—WENDY LYONS

mandate” of the federal government.

Bentley has said there may be some revisions to the law but insists it will not be repealed.

The U.S. Supreme Court has announced it will review challenges to

Arizona’s anti-immigrant law, which has been a model for similar laws in Alabama, Georgia and other states.

Rachele Fruit contributed to this article

Workers protest ‘silent raid’ firings

BY JOEL BRITTON

RICHMOND, Calif.—Some 200 workers, family members and supporters rallied at St. Mark’s Church here Dec. 18 to protest mass “silent raid” firings at Pacific Steel Castings in nearby Berkeley.

The foundry fired more than 200 workers—immigrants mostly from Mexico—following an Immigration and Customs Enforcement audit of the company’s workforce. About one-third of the workers were declared to be “non-residents.” Some have worked here for 20 years.

“They’re being punished for working, which is what people in our community are supposed to do,” said Rev. Deborah Lee, director of the Interfaith

Coalition for Immigrant Rights and an organizer of the rally. “We will not let this happen in silence, nor allow these workers to be treated as though they are invisible.”

The fired workers were members of Local 164B of the Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics & Allied Workers International Union, which conducted a strike in March.

Three workers from Maple Leaf Bakery in Richmond came to the rally in solidarity. The three—members of Local 125 of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union—told the *Militant* that Maple Leaf bosses are also asking employees for documents. More than 100 workers are employed at the bakery.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?

A necessary debate

by Mary-Alice Waters



“To think that a socialist revolution in the U.S. is not possible, you would have to believe not only that the ruling families of the imperialist countries and their economic wizards have found a way to ‘manage’ capitalism. You

would also have to close your eyes to the spreading imperialist wars, civil wars, and economic, financial, and social crises we are in the midst of.” —\$7

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January 9, 1987

DAKOTA CITY, Neb.— Signs stuck in the ground and stenciled on the shack tell the story “Local 222 locked out by IBP” [Iowa Beef Processors].

On December 14 UFCW Local 222 members were locked out after they rejected a company contract proposal.

A union leaflet states the workers have not had a pay increase in five years and that the company wants to freeze wages for another four. The same flyer points out that in 1985 at least 8,000 injuries in the plant required medical attention.

Three Vietnamese workers picketing at the plant’s south end said the state is denying the unionists unemployment benefits.



January 1, 1962

Without consulting Congress, without even informing the American people, President [John] Kennedy has thrown U.S. troops into the civil war raging in South Vietnam.

Already American soldiers have been killed and wounded. This may well be the first in a long series of shipments for burial at home, which became such a familiar aspect of American life during the Korean war.

Washington has been supplying gigantic quantities of arms and large detachments of military advisors and instructors to the corrupt and brutal dictatorship in South Vietnam for the past six years, but only this month has it actually ordered U.S. troops into combat areas.



January 2, 1937

Eight hundred thousand men and women are to be dropped from the relief rolls! That is the real meaning of President Roosevelt’s announcement that he will ask only \$500 million for WPA [Works Progress Administration] to carry through the fiscal year.

This appropriation, unless behind the scenes political manipulation makes Congress cut it still further, will cut the work rolls to 66 percent of the present totals. In round numbers this means 800,000 family heads cut off from their only means of livelihood. Roosevelt is determined to “balance the budget” at the expense of what he believes to be the most defenseless section of the population.

Longshore fight against union busting intensifies

BY MARY MARTIN

LONGVIEW, Wash.— International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 21 in Longview, Wash., is preparing for a large protest to meet the first ship scheduled to load at EGT Development's grain terminal in January.

EGT has refused to hire ILWU members at its terminal in violation of an agreement between the union and the Port of Longview. Instead, the bosses have hired members of Operating Engineers Union Local 701 through a subcontractor under inferior conditions and without a contract.

If EGT prevails, it would be the first West Coast terminal run without ILWU labor in eight decades.

The U.S. Coast Guard and Homeland Security will be overseeing the ship operation on the Columbia River. Coast Guard officials previously visited the union hall to "remind" longshore workers that their credentials could be revoked if union protests interfere with EGT operations.

The union faces substantial legal challenges and a concerted effort by government agencies to smear it as "violent" in order to open the door to attacks by cops and courts.

On Dec. 12 Judge Ron Marshall of the Cowlitz County District Court rejected motions from 45 longshore workers and supporters to dismiss trespass charges against them stemming from two September protests of incoming grains trains leading to the terminal.

"I was surprised at the ruling given how weak the prosecution's case was," Dan Coffman, ILWU Local 21 president, told the *Militant* at the union hall. "They presented contradictory statements. They could not pinpoint our location at the port or produce any documents stating where port property begins and public property ends. Those who have received citations will have trials next year."

Two union members who tried to stop a cop assault on members of the union's Ladies Auxiliary at a Sept. 21 peaceful protest and who were themselves beaten by cops, face felony charges of assaulting police officers.

During the interview Coffman paused to consult with a longshore worker who brought in a new trespass citation just received in the mail stemming from a union protest held last July.

Early next year the union will also be in court before a National Labor Relations Board arbitrator in Portland, Ore., for a suit brought by EGT charging the

union with so-called unfair labor practices.

The union is facing \$315,000 in fines stemming from protests at the Port of Longview. In addition, future trespass citations against union members will carry fines of \$2,500 per person and \$5,000 fines for union officers, under terms of a Sept. 30 ruling by Federal Judge Robert Leighton.

Additionally, the courts are hanging over the union's head a suspended \$25,000 fine for alleged damage to the port stemming from protests on Sept. 7 and 8, which they threaten to impose if a judge deems future protests constitute trespassing.

Dec. 12 port shutdown actions

In the context of the union's fight against the bosses, backed up by their courts, cops, and government—all looking for a pretext to tighten the screws and deal blows to the union—ILWU international president Robert McEllrath wrote a letter from the union's Coast Committee dissociating the union from port shutdown actions organized by "Occupy" protest groups.

The call for Dec. 12 port shutdowns was voted on by the Occupy Oakland general assembly on Nov. 18 in response to cop attacks on occupy encampments and in support of the Longview ILWU fight and the right of port truckers to organize.

A *New York Times* article quotes Boots Riley, rap musician and spokesperson for Occupy Oakland, arrogantly dismissing any value in having official ILWU support. "The organizers of this movement are the working class, and these are issues that belong to the working class. No one has a copyright on working-class struggles."

The character of the protests along the coast varied.

In Oakland, several thousand, including many young people, participated in pickets that closed the port during two shifts.

A Dec. 15 press release by Occupy Oakland hailed the protest as a success "despite concerted efforts . . . by Mayor Jean Quan, the ILWU International leadership (which mounted an international media campaign) and the Port itself."

Occupy Longview organized a port picket line of some 125. "If EGT succeeds in busting up the ILWU, who is next and where does it stop?" Occupy Longview press spokesperson Paul Nipper told the *Militant*. "We absolutely considered and organized our actions



Militant/Mary Martin

Longshore workers from Vancouver, Wash., and Portland, Ore., join picket at EGT terminal in Longview, Wash., Dec. 5. Union is preparing big protest when EGT brings in ship in January.

so as not to make legal problems for our neighbors." Although no one was blocked from entering the port, the Port of Longview decided to close for the day and no ILWU members worked.

In Seattle, supporting ILWU workers in Longview was one of six issues raised by some 500 protesters who blocked the port. Among the leading participants were anarchists with explicitly reactionary, anti-working-class views.

"Now the working class exists most predominately as the underbelly of its former self, as the excluded class," said one such statement handed out at the action. "It no longer holds the same power as it once did to shut down the economy from the workplace. Some of our potential comrades still work in the old world of production: longshoremen, port truck drivers, and others. The rest of us exist outside that world. . . . When we blockade the

ports and staunch the flow of capital, we do it from the outside, as displaced people, no longer as workers."

The Seattle protest was met with a police assault with pepper spray and flash bang grenades.

Meanwhile, the ILWU continues to maintain its picket lines 24 hours a day as it has since June. "We have pledges of support from many unions and organizations to come to Longview for a protest when EGT's ship arrives," Coffman told the *Militant*. "We will continue to fight."

Local 21 provides propane fuel, heaters and coffee for the 24/7 picket lines. Financial contributions to help pay for ILWU Local 21's fight can be made out to "EGT Fighting Fund" and mailed to ILWU Local 21, 617 14th Ave. Longview, WA 98632.

Betsey Stone contributed to this article.

Give holiday 'blood money' to Capital Fund

With the end of the year approaching the bosses have begun to hand out holiday "bonuses." Class-conscious workers take this "blood money" and turn it into contributions to build the communist movement.

Over the last several weeks 11 workers have contributed to the Socialist Workers Party Capital Fund.

Eric Simpson, who works in the Starbucks factory in San Francisco, sent a note along with his check of \$10. "The CEO was Fortune magazine's top CEO of 2011. Starbucks' stock is up 37 percent since the beginning of the year. Blood money."

One-off payments from employers—safety and production bonuses, contract-signing incentives, holiday gifts and the like—are referred to as blood money by communist workers. They are bribes to convince workers to be grateful to the boss instead of standing up and fighting for our interests. All the while the bosses are speeding up jobs, paying us little and treating us without dignity day-in and day-out.

"I have sent in a contribution to the Capital Fund of \$255.89," Maura DeLuca writes from Des Moines, Iowa. "This is blood money I received from the wind turbine manufacturing company I work for. Part is a production bonus, part a 'sign on' bonus for my having stayed there three months."

The Socialist Workers Party's Capital Fund helps finance long-range plans to build the communist movement.

"It's assumed that those of us still considered temps will not be paid for the upcoming days off around Christmas and New Year's," continued DeLuca. "We also can't get the insurance the company offers or accrue vacation days. Yet, we're supposed to be happy with the one-time bonus for staying there three months."

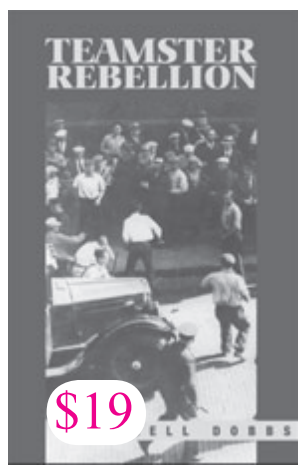
"The production bonus comes from making the company's monthly production quota. We've had to work the majority of Saturdays since I've been there. The little time we have to recuperate on the weekend, along with speed-up to try to make the goals and unsafe conditions, has resulted in frequent accidents. There have also been a number of cases of skin rashes and respiratory illnesses, due to the materials we work with and the lack of ventilation."

"When my coworkers ask what I'm going to do with my bonus, I've been explaining that this truly is blood money and I'm turning it over to the Socialist Workers Party's Capital Fund so it can be used to help build a working-class movement."

Workers who want to make a contribution can contact distributors of the *Militant* listed on page 8 for more information.

—EMMA JOHNSON

Recommended reading



The 1934 strikes that built the industrial union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, recounted by Farrell Dobbs, a central leader of that battle.

This is the first in a four-volume series on the class-struggle leadership of the strikes and organizing drives that transformed the Teamsters union in much of the Midwest into a fighting social movement and pointed the road toward independent labor political action.

Available in English, Spanish and French.

www.pathfinderpress.com

Washington's lies, demands

Continued from front page

sentenced in March to 15 years in prison in Cuba for distributing sophisticated satellite communications equipment to select individuals and groups on the island as part of a State Department program to undermine the Cuban Revolution and its government.

Gross worked for Development Alternatives Inc. under the State Department USAID program, whose stated purpose is "furthering America's foreign policy interests in expanding democracy and free markets."

DAI was USAID's main contractor, having received more than \$2.7 billion between 2000 and December 2009, just before Gross's arrest. It paid Gross more than \$500,000 for his work over five short trips to Cuba in 2009.

A key aspect of Washington's propaganda is that Gross was in Cuba simply to help the Jewish community there connect to the Internet.

According to the Associated Press, "The leaders of Cuba's two main Jewish groups both denied having worked with" Gross. The Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported that "the main Jewish groups in Cuba have denied having any contact with or knowledge of Gross or the program."

In March former President James Carter went to Cuba where he visited Gross in prison. Upon meeting with leaders of the Jewish community, Carter said, "They say they have complete freedom to worship and adequate Internet communication with the outside world, and that they had no substantive contact with Alan Gross."

The growing discussion on the case and the Cuban government's statement take place in the context of speculation and opinions on the idea of Washington and Havana swapping Gross for the Cuban Five held in U.S. prisons.

Cuban statement on Alan Gross case

Considering the increased attention that the case of Alan Gross has had over the last few days, we are sharing with you views held by the Cuban side on the issue:

1. Alan Gross is not in prison because he was assisting the Jews in Cuba to connect to the Internet. All synagogues in Cuba have access to the Internet; they have had it before Alan Gross visited Cuba.

2. Alan Gross was tried in observance of all guarantees; he was tried because he violated Cuban laws while implementing a covert program financed by the U.S. government and aimed at disrupting the constitutional order in Cuba. During his visits to Cuba, Gross never told the persons he contacted that he was working for a U.S. government program.

3. The undercover activities conducted by Alan Gross in Cuba constitute crimes in many countries of the world, including in the United States.

4. The Cuban government has conveyed to the U.S. government its willingness to find a humanitarian solution to the Gross case on reciprocal basis.

The Cuban Five—René González, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and Ramón Labañino—were arrested in 1998 by the FBI, then framed up and jailed by the U.S. government on various trumped-up "conspiracy" charges.

The five had been living and working in Florida, gathering information for the Cuban government on the activities of Cuban counterrevolutionary groups with a long history of violent attacks and acts of sabotage against the Cuban people.

On Sept. 7, *USA Today* columnist DeWayne Wickham wrote a prominent opinion piece titled "Swap 'Cuban five' for U.S. contractor."

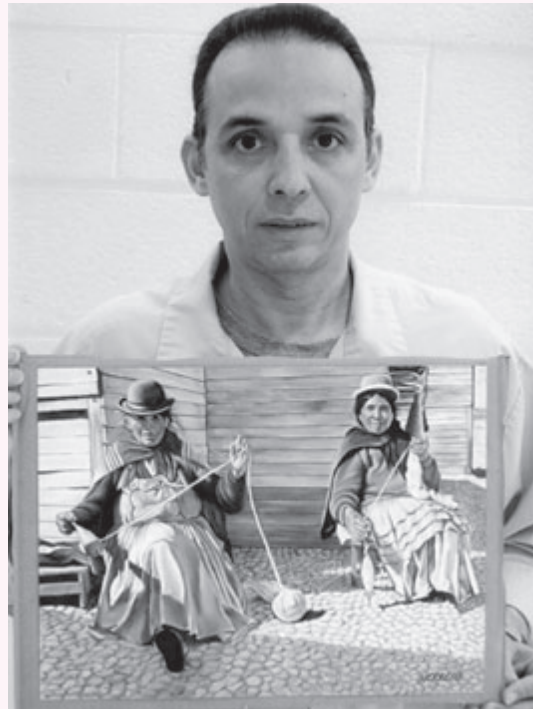
The *Los Angeles Times* published a similar op-ed column Dec. 6 by William LeoGrande, head of the School of Public Affairs at American University in Washington, and Peter Kornbluh, a senior analyst at the National Security Archive at George Washington University.

Following a November visit to Gross, Rabbi David Shneyer from Maryland reported that Gross "felt that the U.S. and Cuba could [swap] him and the Cuban Five."

On the same day as the letter from Congress and the White House demanded Gross's unconditional release, Judy Gross, Alan Gross's wife, denied her husband supported any idea of a swap. "Alan has made clear to me and others . . . that he never has been compared with the five, and is in no way advocating such an exchange." Around the same time, Judy Gross began organizing vigils every Monday in front of the Cuban Interests Section.

One of the Cuban Five, René

Art by Cuban 5 prisoner opens in Seattle



SEATTLE—The M. Rosetta Hunter Art Gallery at Seattle Central Community College and Local 1789 of the American Federation of Teachers are sponsoring from Jan. 3 to Feb. 10 an exhibit of artwork by Antonio Guerrero, shown here in Victorville, Cal., prison holding one of his paintings.

Guerrero is one of the Cuban Five, revolutionaries who were arrested in 1998, then framed up and imprisoned by the U.S. government on various "conspiracy" charges.

"In October the executive board of AFT Local 1789 voted to sponsor this exhibit, donate \$500 to publicize it and organize a reception,"

said John Martinez, chair of the local's Human and Civil Rights Committee. Local 1789 represents the faculty of the Seattle Community College District.

"We are showing the film *Maestra*, about the 1961 successful literacy campaign in Cuba, at four campuses to publicize the exhibit," added Martinez.

The exhibit of paintings and drawings titled "From My Altitude" will be shown during the open gallery hours Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and Tuesday and Wednesday evenings from 5 to 7 p.m.

The gallery faces the main dining area of the college where passersby will see the paintings and learn about the Cuban Five. The opening reception is on Jan. 12 from 5 to 8 p.m.

—CECELIA MORIARITY

González, was released from jail Oct. 7, after serving more than 13 years of a 15-year sentence. He was ordered to remain in the U.S. for three years of supervised release, an unusual punishment for citizens of another country, who are generally deported to their country upon release. The four other revolutionaries are serving prison sentences ranging from 17 years and nine months to double life plus 15

years.

Unlike Gross, the Cuban Five have been subjected to false charges, extraordinarily long sentences and the barbarity of U.S. prison conditions, including long stints in solitary confinement. While Gross has been able to see his family and receive visitors, René González and Gerardo Hernández have been denied the elementary right to see their wives.

'Rain is welcome,' says Raúl Castro in Trinidad

BY SETH GALINSKY

Washington insists that the U.S. embargo of Cuba is nobody's business but Washington's. At least that's what the U.S. representatives assert every year when the U.N. General Assembly votes overwhelmingly to oppose U.S. economic sanctions.

That argument doesn't hold much water in Trinidad and Tobago. At the last minute, the Dec. 8 summit between Cuba and Caricom, a trade bloc of 15 Caribbean nations, had

to be moved out of the Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre in Port of Spain, Trinidad. The Centre, although owned by the government of Trinidad and Tobago, is managed by U.S.-owned Hilton Worldwide.

In a Dec. 5 press statement Hilton Worldwide said that it had applied for a license from the U.S. government to allow the summit and the Cuban delegation to be hosted there but "we have been informed that one will not be granted."



Courtesy Shirley Bahadur/Trinidad Guardian

Cuban President Raúl Castro, second from left, reviewing troops from Trinidad and Tobago upon arrival in the country Dec. 7 to attend Caribbean summit meeting the following day.

The statement noted that "the Office of Foreign Assets Control at the U.S. Department of the Treasury generally prohibits U.S.-based companies from providing any services that benefit the Cuban Government unless specifically licensed." The summit was moved to the National Academy for the Performing Arts.

"How can the USA determine who should stay at the Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre?" the Communication Workers Union, which represents the majority of workers at the Hilton, asked in a statement.

"It is unacceptable to have companies operating in Trinidad and Tobago under U.S. laws which disregard our sovereign laws and policies," said a Dec. 10 editorial in *Trinidad and Tobago News*.

The first Cuba-Caricom summit took place in Havana on Dec. 8, 200. The meeting decided to hold a summit every three years on that date.

Cuban President Raúl Castro was met with a 21-gun salute when he arrived at the airport the day before the summit. In spite of pouring rain, Castro insisted on reviewing a line of Trinidad and Tobago troops. When Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar lamented the rain, Castro smiled and said, "Rain is welcome, drought is bad news," reported the Cuban paper *Granma*.

Revolutionary party organized to fight for workers power

Below is an excerpt from the Spanish edition of *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* by James P. Cannon, one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for December. The book documents the struggle led by Cannon in 1939-40 in defense of the communist program and norms of organization that a petty bourgeois layer inside the Socialist Workers Party was rejecting under the pressure of U.S. imperialism's march to WWII. The following resolution was adopted at the third convention of the party in April 1940. Copyright © 1972 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

The Socialist Workers Party is a revolutionary Marxian party, based on a definite program, whose aim is the organization of the working class in the struggle for power and the transformation of the existing social order. All of its activities, its methods, and its internal regime are subordinated to this aim and are designed to serve it.

Only a self-acting and critical-minded membership is capable of forging and consolidating such a party and of solving its problems by collective thought, discussion, and experience. From this follows the need of assuring the widest party democracy in the ranks of the organization.

The struggle for power organized and led by the revolutionary party is the most



Street sales of *Socialist Appeal*, name *Militant* took in 1937-40. The 1940 resolution explains the SWP "seeks to include in its ranks all revolutionary, class-conscious, and militant workers who stand on its program and are active in building the movement in a disciplined manner."

ruthless and irreconcilable struggle in all history. A loosely knit, heterogeneous, undisciplined, untrained organization is utterly incapable of accomplishing such world-historical tasks as the proletariat and the revolutionary party are confronted with in the present era. This is all the more emphatically true in the light of the singularly difficult position of our party and the extraordinary persecution to which it is subject. From this follows the party's unconditional demand upon all its members for complete discipline in all the public activities and actions of the organization.

Leadership and centralized direction are indispensable pre-requisites for any sustained and disciplined action, especially in the party that sets itself the aim of leading the collective efforts of the proletariat in its struggle against capitalism. Without a strong and firm Central Committee, having the power to act promptly and effectively in the name of the party and to supervise, coordinate, and direct all its activities without exception, the very idea of a revolutionary party is a meaningless jest. . . .

The leadership of the party must be under the control of the membership, its policies must always be open to criticism, discussion, and rectification by the rank and file within properly established

forms and limits, and the leading bodies themselves subject to formal recall or alteration. The membership of the party has the right to demand and expect the greatest responsibility from the leaders precisely because of the position they occupy in the movement.

The selection of comrades to the positions of leadership means the conferring of an extraordinary responsibility. The warrant for this position must be proved, not once, but continuously by the leadership itself. It is under obligation to set the highest example of responsibility, devotion, sacrifice, and complete identification with the party itself and its daily life and action. It must display the ability to defend its policies before the membership of the party, and to defend the line of the party and the party as a whole before the working class in general. . . .

Party membership confers the fullest freedom of discussion, debate, and criticism inside the ranks of the party, limited only by such decisions and provisions as are made by the party itself or by bodies to which it assigns this function. Affiliation to the party confers upon each member the right of being democratically represented at all policy-making assemblies of the party (from branch to national and international convention), and the right of the final and decisive

vote in determining the program, policies, and leadership of the party. . . .

The party requires of every member the acceptance of its discipline and the carrying on of his activity in accordance with the program of the party, with the decisions adopted by its conventions, and with the policies formulated and directed by the party leadership.

Party membership implies the obligation of 100 percent loyalty to the organization, the rejection of all agents of other, hostile groups in its ranks, and intolerance of divided loyalties in general. Membership in the party necessitates a minimum of activity in the organization, as established by the proper unit, and under the direction of the party; it necessitates the fulfillment of all the tasks which the party assigns to each member. Party membership implies the obligation upon every member to contribute materially to the support of the organization in accordance with his means. . . .

[T]he party seeks to include in its ranks all the revolutionary, class-conscious, and militant workers who stand on its program and are active in building the movement in a disciplined manner. . . .

The party as a whole has the right to demand that its work be not disrupted and disorganized, and has the right to take all the measures which it finds necessary to assure its regular and normal functioning. The rights of any individual member are distinctly secondary to the rights of the party membership as a whole. Party democracy means not only the most scrupulous protection of the rights of a given minority, but also the protection of the rule of the majority. The party is therefore entitled to organize the discussion and to determine its forms and limits. . . .

The decisions of the national party convention are binding on all party members without exception and they conclude the discussion on all these disputed questions upon which a decision has been taken. Any party member violating the decisions of the convention, or attempting to revive discussion in regard to them without formal authorization of the party, puts himself thereby in opposition to the party and forfeits his right to membership. All party organizations are authorized and instructed to take any measures necessary to enforce this rule.

December

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Greetings to workers behind bars

The *Militant* sends New Year’s greetings to the 2.5 million fellow workers behind bars in the United States. In addition to those held in federal and state prisons, as well as local jails and juvenile facilities, we recognize those kept behind bars by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, immigration jails, military lockup, U.S. territorial prisons, and in Guantánamo, Cuba.

The unparalleled numbers in U.S. prisons, in their great majority working-class, and the increasing brutality they confront on a daily basis is endemic to the rule of capital and its deepening crisis worldwide. From lockouts to lockdowns, the propertied rulers are pressing in myriad ways to foist this crisis on our backs.

In many prisons around the country, government austerity measures targeting workers have meant the elimination of meals and other “expendable amenities.”

Prison is organized to dehumanize and degrade. We hail those who have risen up against these conditions, in particular the hunger strikers in the Security Housing Units of California. These battles have forged unity among Black, Latino and Caucasian prisoners, countering an entire framework that is designed to divide and conquer. It stands as an important and inspiring example for all working people.

We salute Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, René González and Fernando González, five Cuban exemplary working-class revo-

lutionaries framed up and imprisoned by the U.S. government.

We extend solidarity to other political prisoners, from Native American activist Leonard Peltier to Lynne Stewart, who offered her legal services to many facing government attack, from Puerto Rican independence militant Oscar Lopez Rivera to Mumia Abu-Jamal. We celebrate the overturning of the death sentence against Abu-Jamal and join in the continuing fight to win his freedom.

We joined the growing protests that fought against the execution of Troy Davis and give greetings to the many other Troy Davises subjected to the barbarity of the rulers’ murderous weapon of terror against our class, which they fight to maintain despite widespread abhorrence.

From the California hunger strikes, to the exposure of police torture and frame-ups in Chicago, to demonstrations for voting rights in Florida: these battles for basic rights and dignities behind bars and for those caught up in the so-called “criminal justice” system have won gains over the last 12 months, providing inspiration for 2012.

The *Militant* is proud to offer complimentary or reduced-rate subscriptions to prisoners. And we appreciate letters from prisoners on their struggles and political thoughts. Contribute to the Militant Prisoners’ Fund so we can continue this working-class tradition.

Sugar bosses ‘underestimate workers’

Continued from front page

head, and East Grand Forks in Minnesota—as well as two smaller plants in Chaska, Minn., and Mason City, Iowa.

In addition to paying wages, the company picked up housing and per diem costs for the temporary replacement scabs. According to company spokesman Brian Ingulsrud, this was a “short-term move,” which is hurting their bottom line.

In late November, the largest sugar beet producer in the U.S. began hiring “locally based replacement employees” by placing job ads in newspapers from the local area as well as from other states. The ads offer wages from \$12.50-\$14.75 for general workers to \$24.50 for more skilled positions. The ads also promise “day-one benefits including medical, personal and flex” dollars.

“The company is really rubbing it in our face with those ads,” said Gene Johnson, while picketing in front of the East Grand Forks plant here on Dec. 17. “I worked 18 years with the company as a campaign worker [seasonally, about nine months per year] and never received health benefits in all those years. I became full time last year and got benefits for the first time.”

According to a Dec. 2 letter to “Union Employees” posted on American Crystal’s website, the company’s effort to hire replacement workers “has been excellent, and we plan to transition from the Strom employees to these new American Crystal employees over the coming months.” Ingulsrud said the “long-term goal . . . would be for us to hire 1,300 employees.”

“They have had a couple of job fairs to replace all 1,300 of us and they say they have recruited around 100,” Mel Morris, a locked-out worker from East Grand Forks,” told the *Militant*. “In most cities a company job fair, with unemployment where it is, would have attracted thousands of workers.”

This past week Morris and 30 other locked-out workers went to the Alerus Center in Grand Forks, where the company was holding training sessions for replacement workers. While not allowed to picket, they made their presence known, wearing union jackets and hats, and mixed it up with the newly recruited replacements.

Picketers confront scabs during every shift change. On one such occasion, Dec. 17, this reporter counted about 20 cars entering the plant. Most were from outside North Dakota and Minnesota. They came from Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi,

North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska, Ohio, Wisconsin, Idaho and Colorado.

The role of Republican and Democratic politicians has been in one way or another to allow the company to campaign to wear down the union.

The union sought the intervention of Democratic Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton to help bring American Crystal bosses to the negotiating table. Some 400 workers came to a union-organized meeting with the governor at Moorhead State University Dec. 3 where he listened to presentations by locked-out workers and their supporters.

Days after the Moorhead meeting, Dayton was “asked by the federal officials to withhold comment for the time being,” according to Katharine Tinucci, a Dayton spokesperson. The governor has been silent.

“On the day of the big meeting in Moorhead I decided to stay on the picket line that day,” said Johnson. “That’s more important to me. I don’t vote for these people.”

Workers locked out at American Crystal’s two plants in North Dakota have been denied unemployment benefits by the state government.

Solidarity continues to roll in

Support for the locked-out workers continues to be a mainstay of their struggle. “Despite being denied unemployment benefits, and facing several extreme hardship cases, we are still doing pretty good,” said Lynette Eberhardt, a locked-out worker from the Hillsboro plant. “This week some steelworkers brought us 50 turkeys for the upcoming holidays,” she said in an interview at the Hillsboro union hall.

Locked-out workers, invited to a Teamsters Joint Council 32 meeting in Minneapolis on Dec. 16, received more than \$10,000 from the Joint Council and local Teamster unions. After the meeting, two American Crystal workers, David Harney and Ripplinger, visited the union picket line of striking International Association of Machinists in front of Polar Tank Trailer in Opole on their way back to the Red River Valley. (See article on page 5.)

“We shared with them a lot of our experiences from our many months on the picket lines,” reported Ripplinger. In an act of solidarity, the locked-out workers also donated some of the food they picked up at the union hall of Local 1189 of the United Food and Commercial Workers union in South St. Paul.

Ohio tire lockout

Continued from front page

down. “I moved because I thought Cooper Tire would be a good job,” he stated. “We’ve been working 12-hour days with no overtime pay.” Milek makes \$13 per hour as a scrap trucker.

“New hires would never make it to full pay under the company contract,” said Kenny Sonnenberg, who has worked at Cooper Tire for 19 years. “If you change jobs, you go back to the starting pay rate. That makes it really hard for older workers who need to bid on a less demanding job.”

The union hall across the parking lot from Cooper Tire corporate offices was a beehive of activity leading up to the rally, receiving Christmas donations for kids and ensuring the rotating picket shifts are staffed 24/7. Picket lines surround the plant with fire-barrels and a full stock of firewood that has been donated.

Lori Miller, who has worked at the plant for 19 years, reported that more than \$10,000 has been raised for the Christmas fund drive for 381 children of locked-out workers. One man who saw a flier posted in his factory in nearby Fostoria dropped off \$40 at the hall during these reporters’ visit. “This and many more acts of kindness to help us out have been humbling,” said Miller the day after the rally.

In explaining what prompted them to vote down the company-proposed contract by a 2-1 margin, many workers gave graphic examples of multiple injuries they have suffered due to the pace of work.

Cooper Tire organizes production for many jobs on a piece rate system. According to a number of workers interviewed by the *Militant*, a low hourly rate is guaranteed, but much of their income is from piece rate.

The bosses’ proposed wage scale includes increases to the base rates, but no details on what the new piece rates might be or how much faster workers may have to work to approach their previous income, or even just to keep their job. The company contract would establish—as yet also undisclosed—productivity standards that must be maintained to retain a particular job.

‘Breaks down your body’

“We work 12-hour shifts with only one half-hour break,” said Gary Camper, a pin barrel tuber operator who has worked at Cooper Tire for 22 years. “We used to have relief, but now you have to beg someone to take your place to go to the bathroom since the line doesn’t stop. This is heavy, constant work. It breaks down your body.”

Camper said his base rate is \$6.45 an hour. With incentive and piecework he averages \$23.80 per hour. The company’s contract offer would put the base rate at \$14 an hour, but provides no details on what the “incentive piece rates” might be.

Linda Jones a tread trucker, who has worked at Cooper Tire for 37 years said, “Since I’ve been at this job I’ve had two hernias, shoulder rotator cuffs operated on, carpal tunnel in both hands and broken toes because of the repetition and pace of the job.”

Since the lockout workers report they have been without pay or medical benefits. So far the state of Ohio has not granted unemployment benefits.

“Six years ago I never would have imagined this could happen,” said Rodney Nelson, president of USW Local 207L. He has worked in the plant for 30 years. “The company came in with their extreme contract and wouldn’t even consider our proposals.”

Cooper Tire management declined to speak with the *Militant*.

The company has made no moves to alter its concession demands since locking out union members and maintaining some production with replacement workers and supervisory personnel. In spite of the surprise many workers expressed about the company’s actions, they show great determination to put up a fight.

Messages of support and donations can be sent to USW Local 207L, 1130 Summit St., Findlay, OH 45840. Phone: (419) 422-4224.

Betsy Farley contributed to this article.